

Domestic Relations Committee
Judicial Conference of Indiana

Minutes
February 21, 2003

The Domestic Relations Committee met at the Indiana Judicial Center in Indianapolis, Indiana on Friday, February 21, 2003, from 10:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.

1. Members present. David Bonfiglio; Scott R. Bowers; Thomas J. Felts; Diana LaViolette; Robyn L. Moberly; Michael P. Scopelitis; Richard G. Striegel; and Daniel F. Donahue, Chair.
2. Staff present. Jeffrey Bercovitz provided the committee with staff assistance.
3. Minutes approved. The minutes for the committee on January 17, 2003 were approved.
4. Guests present. Robert Monday and Andrew Cosby, PACE; and Julie Prom were also present.
5. Child Support Guidelines.
 - a. Mr. Bercovitz displayed a draft of the child support guidelines placed on the Internet after the January meeting and made revisions proposed by Judge Donahue. The committee members agreed to extend the deadline for comments to May 1, 2003.
 - b. Committee members reviewed a sample case distributed by Judge Felts using the new table and worksheet for a 50-50 parenting case. In addition, committee members agreed to begin the Parenting Time Table at 52 days and added commentary on this issue.
 - c. The committee members also agreed to place the draft as revised today on the Internet, request interested parties keep looking at the Internet for any changes, and comment on changes as they occur.
 - d. Mr. Bercovitz distributed comments received after the last meeting.
6. Recent legislation. Mr. Bercovitz distributed a copy of HB 1034, about statewide mediation in family law cases, to committee members. Judge Felts gave an update on this legislation.
7. Domestic relations seminar. Mr. Bercovitz distributed minutes from the August 2002 meeting and the June 1998 meeting of the Board of Directors to begin discussion of topics for the domestic relations seminar scheduled for November 13-14, 2003. The following topics were suggested:
 - a. Parental alienation syndrome;
 - b. How a judge should conduct an in-camera interview of a child for domestic relations cases;
 - c. Effects of divorce on children of different ages and the effect of divorce on visitation. An example might be the effect on a five-year-old child vs. a teenager. Use Dr. Judith Wallerstein to discuss her recent study in this area.
 - d. Traumatic effect on a child of parents arguing over child issues after divorce;
 - e. Education of parents going through divorce;
 - f. Review by Charles Asher, attorney, of his series of exercises parents complete before or after divorce – some may be found at proudtoparent.org.
 - g. Language to incorporate into a divorce decree to cover different kinds of situations.
 - h. Ask two (2) child therapists what judges need to know about divorce.
 - i. Bring Dr. Rebesco to explain why parenting time guidelines break at various ages; bonding issues; signs of children that will not do well going back and forth between families including the several hours needed for some children to calm down when visitation is over.

8. Next meeting dates. The members of the committee agreed to meet again on Friday, March 21, 2003, May 16, 2003, July 18, 2003, August 15, 2003, October 17, 2003, all from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Indiana Judicial Center; and Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 13-14, 2003 for an all day Judicial Center Seminar on Domestic Relations; and agreed to cancel the April meeting because of Good Friday and hold no Nov. 2003 mtg.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Bercovitz, Director
Juvenile and Family Law